

West Fork Ranger Station  
South Side Rincon-Red Box Road  
5.4 Miles East from Red Box Station  
Sierra Madre Vicinity  
Los Angeles County  
California

HABS No. CA-2202

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CAL,  
19-SIMA.V,  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, CA 94102

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Name

West Fork Ranger Station (Shortcut Ranger Station)

Location

Located in the Angeles National Forest 5.4 miles east from the Red Box Ranger Station along the Rincon to Red Box Road on the West Fork of the San Gabriel River, north of Sierra Madre, Los Angeles County. Cadastral location is T.2N., R.11W., SE 1/4, SE 1/4, NE 1/4, Section 20. S.B.B.M. on the Mt. Wilson 7.5' Series Topographic Map. UTM Coordinates are 11/403420E/3789720N.

Present Use

Structure presently abandoned

Statement of Significance

The West Fork Ranger Station appears to be the first Federal Forest Ranger Station built in California and the second built in the United States with government funds (\$70.00). It is the oldest standing station on the Angeles National Forest and possibly on the other Forests within the Region. It symbolizes the early history of Federal Forestry in Southern California, and reflects a Ranger Station in a rustic mode.

Date of Erection

The Ranger Station was constructed in September 1900 by Forest Rangers Louis Newcomb, Philip Beque, Jack Baldwin and Willard Sevier (No Author 1937:14, Show 1945:89; Robinson, W. 1946:38; Robinson, J. 1977:159, 1979:145).

Original and Subsequent Owners

The building has been "owned" by the Federal Government since its construction. It has been administered by the Angeles National Forest (nee San Gabriel Timberland Reserve 1892-1907, and San Gabriel National Forest 1907 - 1908).

Historical Events and Persons Associated with Structure

The building served as a Ranger Station from 1900 to 1924 when it was abandoned due to a fire in the area. It was later re-occupied in the spring of 1936 ultimately serving as a store room for the Ranger Residence built directly to the south in 1933. The residence was removed in 1977 and the cabin has been abandoned since then. The cabin when it functioned as a ranger station, served as the headquarters for the protection of the area in terms of fire protection and visitor use.

Architect or Engineer

No information has been found to determine whether the cabin reflects the design of the builders or a Forest building plan. Louie Newcomb had built several cabins in the area before he became a Federal Ranger so if the design was the builder's, it was probably his concept.

### Architectural Information

The cabin was built of alder logs taken from the nearby creek bottom and incense cedar from adjacent mountain slopes. The structure is a one room, single detached 1 1/2 story 'A' frame cabin with a rectangle plan. The walls of this structure consist of horizontal alder logs, on top of a more recent granitic rock/cement foundation, with a high hip gable. No chimney location was discerned (newer cedar shake roof added), so probably utilized stove for heat. The eaves projected with rafters exposed, and the verges are plain and projecting. Flat hinged windows occurred in every wall (once) and the main (only) door is located off-center of the main facade. A two-step straight rock cement stairway led to the door. The building itself is oriented N88E and the horizontal logs are set in with the ends v-or sharp notched. The space between the logs have been mortared with twigs and branches nailed to the logs to support the mortar in the exterior. Recent wood and boards have been used as support for the mortar in the interior. A cement floor was poured and probably was associated with the 1936 restoration of the cabin. It was at this time that rock foundation was added and it consisted of native granitic stone, which was angular and ranged in lengths from 6" - 24". There is an average of two courses on the west side and four - five courses on the east side. The horizontal logs were sawn and the ends hand-hewed. The letters U.S. are stamped in the ends of the logs. The logs that serve as the stress point where the wall and roof meet are hewed flat on all sides. Short rounds, with the roof side hewed flat, are used as eave/roof supports. Internally, there are six cross (width) rafters with the top side hewed flat which may suggest a loft. Hewn logs are used as supports from the cross supports (third from South end to apex of north and south walls). There are windows in each wall: off center on the west wall (but symmetrical with the door), a little bit off center on the south and east walls, and in the loft area near the apex of the north wall. All the windows and doors were missing, but hinges for all remained. only nails seen were cut nails of various sizes. The dimensions of the structure were on the average 6.25 meters (20.85 feet) north - south by 4.76 meters (15.9 feet) east - west with an approximate height of 15 feet high. Associated elements such as fences, corrals, hitching rails and so on are missing.

### Bibliography

No Author

1937, The Upper West Fork. Trails Magazine 4(3) :14-16, 20.

Robinson, John W.

1977 The San Gabriels - Southern California Mountain Country.  
Golden West Books, San Marino, California.

1979 Trails of the Angeles - 100 hikes in the San Gabriels  
Fourth edition. Wilderness Press, Berkeley

Robinson, W.W.

1946 The Forest and the People - The Story of the Angeles National Forest.  
Title Insurance and Trust, Los Angeles.

Show, S.B.

1945 History of the Angeles National Forest. Unpublished Ms on file, U.S.  
Forest Service San Francisco.

Above publications available in the Forest Archaeologist's Office in the  
Supervisor's Office, Angeles National Forest, Pasadena, California.

Project information

The Angeles National Forest is proposing to dismantle the West Fork  
Ranger Station and move it to another location where it will be rehab-  
ilitated, restored and reconstructed retaining as much of the original  
fabric as possible. The cabin is presently suffering from dry rot and  
vandalism. The proposed move will result in treatment of the deterior-  
ation, afford it maximum protection and incorporate it within interpre-  
tive programs. These forms have been prepared by Michael J. McIntyre,  
Forest Archaeologist, Angeles National Forest on June 1982 and revised  
September 1983.